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ABSTRACT

This document provides a description of the needs assessment component for an Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I program. The needs assessment model is based on the principle that to be effective, instruction must be tailored to meet the unique needs of the individual child. Other principles of growth and development are also incorporated into the model. The needs assessment process identifies discrepancies between attitudes, behaviors, and skills that seem desirable and attainable (needs of children) and the present attitudes, behaviors, and skills as indicated by the data (the extent to which needs are being met). Within the context of the needs of the educationally deprived child, the needs assessment process involves the collection of data in the affective and cognitive domains and analyzes them to provide the basis for answering two questions: What are the needs of these children? What are the environmental factors which will help meet these needs? The involvement of parents in their children's education and the relationship between parents and school personnel are seen as important aspects of the success or failure of Title I programs for children. This document also includes examples of various forms such as the Needs Assessment Report Form, the Role Definitions Form and the Critical Incidents Excercise Form. (Author/AM)

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TITLE I ESEA

NEEDS ASSESSMENT MODEL

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COMMITMENT

It is our belief that 1) educationally deprived children are those whose environments have been inadequate for meeting their individual needs, and 2) that failure does not reside within the child. Requirements have been made for them to achieve not according to their own physical, emotional, and intellectual growth, but in response to imposed standards.

It is our goal, therefore, that Title I programs will not resemble those which have failed to meet the developmental needs of children and those to which children have not responded positively. Rather, they will be designed to move freely with children as they pursue their own thoughts, desires, and needs in the cognitive, emotional, and physical aspects of their lives.

In short, we view as most appropriate for Title I funding those programs which reflect in their design consideration of principles of growth and development.

Incorporated into the model below are the following principles of growth and development:

1. Learning occurs most naturally in a non-coercive environment.
2. Intellectual, emotional and psychomotor development is an individual process and occurs at a different rate in each child.
3. Learning depends on a state of readiness that results from maturation.

MOST IMPORTANT NEEDS OF CHILDREN
(DESIRABLE ATTITUDES, BEHAVIORS, AND SKILLS)

DIFFERENTIAL ↕ } UNMET NEEDS

LEVEL TO WHICH NEEDS ARE MET
(PRESENT ATTITUDES, BEHAVIORS, AND SKILLS)

"THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS IDENTIFIES A DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN (1) ATTITUDES, BEHAVIORS, AND SKILLS THAT SEEM DESIRABLE AND ATTAINABLE, (NEEDS OF CHILDREN) AND (2) THE PRESENT ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOR, AND SKILLS AS INDICATED BY THE DATA (EXTENT TO WHICH NEEDS ARE BEING MET)."

"NEEDS ASSESSMENT IS A SET OF ACTIONS WHICH EXPOSE EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUSPECTED DIFFERENTIAL."

"NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS IN A DATA BASE OF INFORMATION FOR PROGRAM PLANNING."

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Title I ESEA "program should be designed to meet the special educational needs of those educationally deprived children who have the greatest need for assistance." Hence, the needs assessment component of Title I is based on the principle that to be effective, instruction must be tailored to meet the unique needs of the individual child. Therefore, it is important to identify precisely the special emotional, physical, and educational needs of children as the basis of program focus.

Needs Assessment may be defined as a process through which:

1. A set of "most important" needs (desirable attitudes, behaviors, and skills) are determined as perceived by parents, teachers, administrators (survey, Q-sort, etc.)

2. Study is made of information from various data on Master List Children to determine the extent to which these most important needs are being met, (present attitudes, behaviors, and skills) and if there are other needs revealed by the data.

   a. Judgments of perceptive teachers based on their experiences with and observations of the child;

   b. Judgments of parents; (preferably based on information obtained through a planned interview(s) with a professional regarding the child);

   c. School records (various types of records maintained by the school and/or by classroom teacher(s);

   d. Self-concept measurements;

   e. Test data--measures of academic achievement;

   f. Health records; and

   g. Others deemed appropriate.

3. A decision is made regarding program priorities (which needs will be addressed in the program).

4. Information of results from Steps 1-3 are disseminated to all participants.

5. A study is made to determine what factors in the environment facilitate the meeting of these needs and those which inhibit.

6. Program planning is accomplished as decisions are made by parents, teachers, and administrators regarding those positive environmental characteristics which will appear in the program.

WHO IS THE EDUCATIONALLY DEPRIVED CHILD?

The traditional school system establishes goals of both attitude and achievement for the child. Every school district has written or informally recognized statements of goals or standards which it seeks to achieve in educating children. When a child does not conform to the school's standard, when there is a differential between the school's goal and the student's achievement in a certain area, a child is identified as educationally deprived. This differential is the result of the child's being in an environment which has failed to respond to his individual physical, emotional, and intellectual needs.

Within this context, data is collected in the affective and cognitive areas and analyzed to provide the basis for answering these questions:

1. What are the most important needs of children?
2. What are the environmental factors which will help meet those needs?

NEEDS

Question: How do we know the needs (desirable attitudes, behaviors, skills) of a child have been met?

Answer: 1. Ask people who know the child. (The child himself, his/her parents, his/her teacher(s).)
   a. What skills or behaviors does he exhibit?
   b. What does his/her behavior tell us about attitudes?

2. Review objective data to determine present attitudes, behaviors, skills

Question: How is an unmet need provided for?

Answer: 1. Examine the things that caused the need to go unmet.

2. Plan to:
   a. Eliminate the characteristics of the environment that inhibit meeting the need.
   b. Promote the positive things in the child's environment that will allow the skills (cognitive and psychomotor needs) or attitudes (affective needs) to develop.

3. Put plans into action

4. See if the differential between the desirable attitudes, behaviors, and skills and the observed and documented attitudes, behaviors, and skills has been reduced.

5. If it has not, examine the reasons and make new plans. (Recycle through the entire procedure.)

THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONCEPT

"In its simplest form, a needs assessment is an attempt to determine the differential between the needs of children (desirable attitudes, behaviors and skills) as agreed upon by parents and staff, and the extent to which these needs have been met (present attitude, behaviors, and skills), as evidenced by various available data. It is thus determined which of the unmet needs will be addressed by the program. A study is made to determine what environmental characteristics would help meet the needs and those which would inhibit. A decision is made as to which positive environmental factors will be incorporated into the program."

As an example, it has been determined by parents and staff that an important need of children is "to possess feelings of self-worth." Teacher observations and student self-concept measurements indicate that for the group, self-worth is low. It has been decided that this need will be addressed in the program. In studying the environment to determine how it could best facilitate the development of self-worth in the group, the following positive environmental conditions were agreed upon:

1. Opportunity to participate with peers in decision-making.

2. Opportunity for creative activities.

3. Teacher who responds to real concerns, interests, fears and joys of child.

4. Availability of materials appropriate to the ability and and interest of the child.

5. Opportunity for the child to pursue and achieve in his own area of interest.

6. A teacher who is aware that behavior is not "wrong" but is an expression of a child's need and understanding at any given time and is able to respond to these needs.

It was decided that the following factors would inhibit the development of self-worth:

1. Lack of opportunity to express child's concerns and interests.

2. Activities which are all teacher-determined.

3. The use of materials which are not geared to the individual child.

4. A disapproving, impatient teacher.

5. Lack of opportunity for creative expression.

6. Environment in which rewards are given only for conforming to adult standards of behavior.

It was agreed by parents and staff that all the positive environmental conditions listed are equally essential to the development of "self worth" and, therefore, should all be included in the program. It was also agreed that every effort should be made to help staff members identify the presence of negative environmental factors and find ways of reducing them.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents and School Personnel working together in an effort to understand the needs of children in terms of principles of growth and development can result in more effective and responsive education for Title I children.

This accepted educational principle is the underlying philosophy of the Title I program. It is based upon an awareness that parents and teachers both provide vital relationships in the lives of children, and that, through their mutual efforts in support of children, they can significantly assist them toward their most positive development.

Parental Involvement comprises two kinds of participation:
(1) Title I parents serving as members of the Parent Advisory Council;
(2) Parents participating in and contributing to the Title I school program, sharing in the daily experiences of the children.

As members of the PAC, parents serve as advisors and make recommendations relative to the needs assessment process, program planning, screening, program implementation and evaluation of the Title I program. In order for parents to function in these capacities effectively, technical assistance is needed. Many local school districts arrange special conferences or workshops, frequently in conjunction with nearby districts, for parents so that they may have clearer understanding of the Title I program and of their roles.

Critical materials concerning the Title I program are distributed to the PAC members free of charge. These materials may include among

other appropriate State and local materials the following:

1. The Federal legislation, regulations and guidelines (44-45A)
2. Parental Involvement in Title I, ESEA (1972)
3. Title I, ESEA: How It Works - A Guide for Parents and Parent Advisory Councils (1974)
4. Questions and Answers: Programs for Educationally Deprived Children Under ESEA Title I (1971)
5. State Title I Regulations

Parents may be involved in a variety of ways in the school's Title I program, among which are the following:

1. They may visit the programs and share with children in their activities, providing a positive and supportive relationship.
2. They may fulfill this supportive role as teacher aides (either as volunteers or as paid paraprofessionals), as library assistants, as tutors, as home visitors.
3. They may continue their supportive role in their homes by responding to the interests and expressed needs of their children.

The involvement of parents in supporting their children as they pursue their individual interests and school activities helps children develop healthy attitudes toward themselves and learning.

PRIORITY NEEDS SUMMARY SHEET

NEED	RANK ORDER

11

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Exploring the Need

Need: _____

Typical Behaviors:

If this need has been met, how is the child likely to think, feel, or act? (Brainstorm and list all ideas for your group. Make one large list using poster paper and the magic marker.)

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Exploring the Need

Need: _____

Typical Behaviors:

If this need has not been met in a child, how is he/she likely to think, feel, or act? (Brainstorm and list all ideas for your group. Make one large list using the poster paper and magic marker.)

STEP II - "FINDING EVIDENCE REGARDING THE EXTENT TO WHICH NEEDS HAVE BEEN MET"

HYPOTHETICAL EVIDENCE OF STATUS
Group Data for Children on Master List

Grade 5
147 Students
Data given as averages for entire group

1. Standardized Reading and Math Achievement Test Scores

(Grade equivalency results)

	What Is	What Could Be	Differential
Reading	3.9	5.0	1.1
Math	4.5	5.0	.5
Language Arts	4.0	5.0	1.0

2. Teacher Judgment as to Instructional Level for Reading, Math & Language

Math - Group is 1/2 year or more below expected 5th grade level

Reading - Group is nearly 2 years below 5th grade level

Language Arts - 60% of group demonstrate significant level of difficulty in communication in English

3. Behavior and Motivation as Observed by Teachers and Parents

The differential between the desirable attitudes and behavior and the present observed attitudes and behavior listed below will be identified according to the following scale:

Differential is:

4 — very large -- requires immediate corrective action

3 — large -- should be included in program planning

2 — small -- may be considered after other discrepencies have been remediated

1 — very small -- of no consequence

Differential	Behavior
3	Appears generally confident, exhibits feelings of self-worth
4	Expresses himself/herself openly, without inhibition
3	Pursues personal interests
2	Respects attitudes and values of others
3	Works independently
4	Enjoys learning, self-motivated
2	Exhibits pride and is comfortable with his/her culture
3	Is able to cope with demands of adults
2	Is willing and able to fulfill responsibilities
3	Appears comfortable and not frustrated in classroom environment
2	Is able to make decisions

4. Students' Self-Concept Measurement -- Evaluation of Themselves and School Experiences

(Following are those responses which occurred most frequently)

My opinions don't matter

I'm bored in school.

Teachers are too bossy.

School is no fun

5. Health

30% of the children are suffering from anemia.

15% of the children have visual problems.

6. Attendance

Attendance averaged 72% for the previous year.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM

STEP I Determining Needs (Perceived)

List below those "most important" needs derived from Q-sort and/or parent, student, teacher surveys.

_____

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_____

STEP II Finding Evidence that a Need Exists (Data Indications for Master List Children)

Check the data sources used in determing if the above needs are being met.

_____ a. Judgments of perceptive teachers based on their experiences with and observations of the child

_____ b. Judgments of parents (preferably based on information obtained through a planned interview(s) with a professional regarding the child)

_____ c. School records (various types of records maintained by the school and/or by classroom teacher(s)

_____ d. Self concept measurements

_____ e. Test data--measures of academic achievement

_____ f. Health records

_____ g. Others deemed appropriate

List below those needs determined in STEP I which are not being met as evidenced by the data reviewed in STEP II. List also any other needs indicated by the data.

Cognitive [Program Area(s)]	Affective	Other

STEP III Making decisions as to Program Priorities

List below in order of priority those needs to be addressed in the program. (Based on findings in STEP II.)

Cognitive [Program Area(s)]	Affective	Other

STEP IV Dissemination of Results, Steps I through IV, to All Participants in Needs Assessment Process

Date: _____

Designate Method:

____Meeting ____Mailing ____Other (Explain)

STEP V Studying the Environment

For each need indicated in Step III determine those environmental factors in the classroom which would help meet the need and those which would inhibit meeting the need. Brainstorm all external and internal forces and human and material resources.

NEED _____

Factors which help meet the need	Factors which inhibit meeting the need

STEP VI Determining Environmental Factors to be Included in the Program

Based on decisions made in Step V, list below those positive environmental characteristics which will appear in the program.

_____

_____

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Based on decisions made in Step , list below those negative environmental characteristics which will be eliminated.

_____

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ROLE DEFINITIONS

How should parents be involved in the total Title I Program?

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ROLE DEFINITIONS

How should teachers be involved in the total Title I Program?

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ROLE DEFINITIONS

How should administrators be involved in the total Title I Program?

CRITICAL INCIDENTS EXERCISE
(Taken From System Developed By A. Wight, et al)

Critical Incidents Answer Sheet

For each item select your reaction from the following scale, then answer the other questions. The number you select from the scale should indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinions, attitudes or actions of the person in each incident. Choose five of the ten items below.

Completely disagree	Disagree quite a bit	Agree as much as disagree	Agree quite a bit	Completely agree
1	2	3	4	5

__ Agreement_____ What would you do?
Why?

__ Agreement_____ What would you do?
Why?

What would you do?

__ Agreement_____
Why?

What would you do?

__ Agreement_____
Why?

What would you do?

__ Agreement_____
Why?

24

1. The school district I work in has adopted a grand plan for working in the affective domain in the classroom. They plan to run workshops for the teachers and we're supposed to start doing all the new things in our school. I think their plans are admirable, but I just don't have time to take on anything new. Most of the district meetings and workshops we have are just a waste of time, anyway, I'm too busy just trying to keep ahead of the everyday demands. I really don't have time to add anything new that really hasn't been proven. I'm going to notify the superintendent that our school won't be able to participate in the project they've arranged for us.

2. I've been a history teacher for 17 years because I feel that for students to grasp the meaning of today's world they must first have a historical perspective. By being aware of events leading to the present, their decisions about what role they will play in society will be more rational. I am proud of the fact that the students and other teachers have labeled me as a "hard" teacher. Just recently, however, I called upon a young spanish girl to answer a question based on the previous nights homework. She didn't answer; in fact, she sat there silently without even looking up at me. This type of behavior is incomprehensible to me, so I reminded her of the homework assignment. After a long wait she raised her head and muttered something unintelligble under her breath. All the other spanish kids in the class broke into laughter. I consider this behavior unacceptable and something I won't stand for. So I immediately ushered the young lady to the principal's office.

3. I attended a workshop last summer and made some decisions about changing my teaching methods toward a more open, child-centered approach. I discussed my plans with the principal and he told me to go ahead and try to make some of the changes I outlined. With his support I've been working hard at improving my teaching all year and I'm beginning to see some great results. The children are deeply involved in their projects, working in small groups very well. Naturally this results in a noisier room, but the noise is that of groups of productive children and isn't disruptive at all. The two teachers in the rooms next to mine have been complaining to other staff members about this noise. Today in our faculty meeting they told the group that the situation was intolerable, that they couldn't teach with so much noise coming from my room. The principal listened to their complaints and told me to try to keep the noise down in my room. I'm very angry about what happened. I plan to see the principal in the morning and tell him I think he really let me down and should have supported me.

4. I am the counselor in an elementary school with a 90% Indian enrollment. I have a Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling as well as a Ph.D in Anthropology. The general topic of my thesis was the cultural conflicts of the Tewa speaking Indian people of Northern New Mexico. I have provided much leadership in workshops for my school's staff relevant to Indian culture and values. However; efforts have not led to a revived interest among teachers and administrators to provide for Indian students' needs. They just seem to tolerate my presentations. On top of that, try as I may, the parents of Indian students don't seem to respond to my efforts to involve them in school affairs. They don't return my phone messages or notes I send home with students. If they show up for parent/counselor conferences at all they are late and due to my busy schedule, we never have enough time to accomplish anything. Because of these disappointments, I've decided to resign from the Public school system and go to work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs where I will be able to help Indian students directly.

5. Our district has decided to focus on improving the child's self-concept this year. Each school has a small team that is responsible for training the rest of the school's staff in some new methods for working in this area. Our team is really involved in this new program. We've spent lots of extra hours working out new methods and planning our staff training program. During our first meeting with the staff, four of the teachers said they were already working with self-concept and they didn't have any time to do anything extra. They weren't even willing to discuss the serious problems we see in the school. We were all disgusted with their attitude. We feel this is such an important area and needs much more attention. Our team has decided to ask the principal to talk to the four teachers and require them to participate in the training sessions we're conducting. We hate to have to do this, but these four teachers are the ones in the school who actually need the most help.

6. Our staff has been having meetings to discuss methods for helping to improve a child's self-concept. I'm beginning to feel like I'm the only one on the staff who is really concerned about what these kids are going to need to make it in this society. It seems to me that the best way to improve a child's self-concept is to enable him to know that he has learned all the things that he needs when he finishes school. I've spent lots of time working out the curriculum guides for our staff and I'm reasonably satisfied that we have finally gotten the things written down that we need. I'm not willing to spend a lot of time discussing things that aren't really related to the essential, basic things that children need. Recently a parent-community committee has decided to review the curriculum of the school. I'm going to bring this matter up with them. I'm sure the parents will agree with me that their children need to learn the basics.

7. I have been interviewing applicants for a position in our ninth grade social studies team. I have narrowed the choice down to three teachers who I feel are almost equally qualified for the position. Yesterday afternoon the three other members of the team asked to meet with me after school. They were quite upset and very critical of the way I have been interviewing for the position. They said they have developed a whole new approach to teaching social studies and that their methods require a deep understanding of and commitment to the philosophy that all three agreed formed the foundation of their work. Their methods require hours of extra preparation as a team and much honest, open communication. They felt that since the team member who was being hired would be working so closely with them they should have some say in making the decision about who was hired. They felt that one person I had eliminated had a greater understanding of their approach than any of the three I am considering. I told them that I would think about what they had said, but I really don't think they should have the final say about hiring. I eliminated the person they liked because he just hadn't had enough experience at the ninth grade level, while the three I am considering have taught ninth grade before and have been successful. I'm not going to reverse my decision now, but I think I will ask the three candidates to observe the social studies classes for a day to help me decide whether they will fit in well with what is happening there.

8. I have just become the new Federal Programs Coordinator in a small school system. As an administrator of funds which are earmarked for specific groups of students, I am faced with quite a dilemma. On the one hand, I am philosophically against any procedures which discriminate between students. On the other hand, I am aware that some students in my district need specific, supplementary assistance which cannot be provided through the operational budget. Compounding this problem is the pressure I am under to do well in my job so that I may achieve my goal of becoming superintendent someday. But Washington and State Department of Education officials continue to make requirements of me which seem very unreasonable.

I have decided that the only situation I can work within is to spread this so-called categorical money to as many students as I can. After all, by helping the school system in general, the level of educational services is raised for all students.

9. Sometimes I wonder if teaching is really worth the efforts I have to make and the problems that I have to contend with. For three years I have been attempting to develop active learners in my classes, students who participate in making the decisions about the course, planning activities, evaluating both their individual progress and how well they are working together. I've seen tremendous changes in students, and have felt that my methods were beginning to prove themselves. But today in our faculty meeting I again had to contend with teachers who don't understand that teaching content is not the main goal of education or that students do not have to be constantly controlled. Two of the teachers complained that they were having problems with their classes because the students were in my classes for part of the day and had gotten used to no discipline and thought they could talk back to the teachers about anything. They blamed my "permissiveness" as the cause of the behavior problems of the entire school, even though I don't even have most of the kids they were mentioning in my classes. I'm just getting too tired to keep explaining and defending myself all the time. Sometimes I think that I'm the only one in the whole school who believes in kids, but still I have trouble justifying my having to fight with the old system and try to get a position with a private school that seems to be headed in the direction I want to go.

10. As a 12th grade teacher, I feel that by the time students reach my classes they are young adults and should assume a reasonable amount of responsibility. I therefore assign much homework. A young man in one of my classes refuses to hand in any of his homework. I've talked with him, but his only answer is that it takes him an hour to get home after school, then he is busy doing chores on his parents farm. It seems to me that he is placing his farm work above getting an education. I'm recommending to my principal that he either do my assignments or else he be taken out of my class.